

(2)

10/46/

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

FRP: . 13. . . .

STATE

25X1

80 4923556

PAGE 001

NC 4923556

TOR: 272138Z AUG 80

DD RUEAII8

ZNY CCCCC ZOC STATE ZZH

TS70255

DE RUEHC

DE RUEHUK #8225/01 2401740

ZNY CCCCC ZZH

P 271732Z AUG 80

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6497

INFO RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 2658

RUEHAD/USINT BAGHDAD 0447

RUDKKR/AMEMBASSY TUNIS 0992

BT

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ LONDON 18225

EXDTS

E.O. 12065: RDS-3 8/27/10 (STREATOR, E.J.) OR-M

TAGS: PEPR, PINS, LY, US

SUBJ: NEW YORK TIMES JOURNALIST YOUSSEF IBRAHIM INTERVIEWS

+ GADHAFI

(MUMMAR)

1. CONFIDENTIAL ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: IBRAHIM PROVIDED US AUG 26 WITH IMPRESSIONS OF LIBYA AND GADHAFI'S INTENTIONS ACQUIRED DURING RECENT VISIT. AS USUAL, SOME OF THE COLONEL'S MORE PROVOCATIVE VIEWS WERE AIRED OFF-THE-RECORD. IN THIS CASE, GADHAFI INDICATED THAT PRIMARY PURPOSE IN AGREEING TO THE INTERVIEW WAS TO ENSURE THAT AMERICAN MEDIA OBTAINED DAMAGING INFORMATION ON PRESIDENT CARTER'S DIALOGUE WITH THE LIBYANS. IBRAHIM SAID THE COLONEL OBVIOUSLY DERIVED A GREAT DEAL OF SATISFACTION FROM HIS WHITE HOUSE EXCHANGES, BUT IS AWARE THAT THIS PHASE OF LIBYAN-U.S. RELATIONS HAS ENDED. ON OTHER MATTERS, IBRAHIM DID NOT PICK UP ANY RUMORS THAT GADHAFI PLANNED TO ANNOUNCE DRAMATIC MEASURES AGAINST U.S. PETROLEUM INTERESTS DURING SEPTEMBER

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

00

64

2

CONFIDENTIAL

STATE

80 4923556

PAGE 002
TOR: 272138Z AUG 80

NC 4923556

1 FESTIVITIES. CONCLUDED THAT TOBRUK DISTURBANCES HAVE BEEN EXAGGERATED. SAID IT WAS UNLIKELY QADHAFI WOULD BE TOPPLED IN THE NEAR FUTURE. AND OBSERVED GROUP OF TEN IRANIANS WHO APPARENTLY COORDINATED LIBYAN-IRANIAN ACTIVITIES FROM TRIPOLI'S BEACH HOTEL. REFERRING TO THREAT FROM MEMBER OF SHAHATI'S FOREIGN LIAISON OFFICE (FLO) IBRAHIM SAID THIS WAS HIS LAST TRIP TO LIBYA. END SUMMARY.

3. GENERAL IMPRESSIONS. WE HAD A LONG SESSION WITH IBRAHIM AUG. 26, DURING WHICH HE SHARED HIS IMPRESSIONS OF CHANGES WHICH HE NOTICED IN LIBYA AND QADHAFI SINCE HIS LAST VISIT TO INTERVIEW THE COLONEL IN DECEMBER 1979. THE ATMOSPHERE, NOTED IBRAHIM, WAS NOW MUCH MORE SINISTER. SURVEILLANCE WAS INTENTIONALLY MORE OBVIOUS; THE HOTEL TELEX OPERATOR REFUSED TO ALLOW HIM TO CABLE STORIES TO NEW YORK (JAMAHIRIYA ARAB NEWS AGENCY INSTEAD PROVIDED FACILITIES); HOTEL ALSO REFUSED TO PLACE INTERNATIONAL CALLS FOR HIM; QADHAFI SUPPLIED NAMES OF TWO LIBYANS IN LONDON WHOM THE REGIME IS TRACKING, AND ASKED JOURNALIST TO ADVISE LONDON PEOPLE'S BUREAU IF HE CAME ACROSS THEM (IBRAHIM GAVE THE NAMES TO UK EMBASSY IN TRIPOLI SO THAT SECURITY AUTHORITIES IN LONDON COULD PROVIDE THE LIBYANS WITH PROTECTION IF NECESSARY); THE COLONEL ASKED ABOUT IBRAHIM'S CONTACTS IN EGYPT, AND SENT A COUPLE OF OFFICIALS TO MEET WITH HIM LATER IN HAM-HANDED ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN HIS COOPERATION IN RECRUITING THESE EGYPTIANS.

4. QADHAFI INTERVIEW. IBRAHIM SAID QADHAFI LEFT NO DOUBT ABOUT HIS INTENTIONS TOWARD PRES. CARTER. AFTER TWO HOURS OF QUESTIONING, THE COLONEL ASKED IBRAHIM TO SHUT OFF HIS TAPE RECORDER. LOOKING QUITE PLEASED WITH HIMSELF, QADHAFI REMARKED, "I THINK I GAVE YOU A LOT OF DAMAGING INFORMATION ON PRESIDENT CARTER." IBRAHIM SAID THERE WERE STILL A FEW GAPS IN HIS UNDERSTANDING OF QADHAFI'S EXCHANGES WITH THE WHITE HOUSE VIA WASHINGTON PEOPLE'S BUREAU CHAIRMAN ALI HOUDEIRI, SO THE COLONEL PROVIDED ADDITIONAL DETAILS AND ARRANGED FOLLOW-UP MEETING WITH TWO OFFICIALS FROM SHAHATI'S FLO WHO WERE KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT THE LIBYAN-U.S. EXCHANGES. (IBRAHIM SAID HE PLANNED MORE STORIES IN THE NYT ON THIS SUBJECT.)

CONFIDENTIAL

65

(2)

CONFIDENTIAL

STATE

HO 4923556

PAGE 003

NC 4923556

TOR: 272138Z AUG 80

5. U.S. DIPLOMATIC PRESENCE IN TRIPOLI. OFF-THE-RECORD, QADHAFI ASSERTED THAT REASON FOR DEPARTURE OF U.S. DIPLOMATS FROM TRIPOLI WAS NOT DECEMBER ATTACK ON THE EMBASSY. INSTEAD, NOTED QADHAFI, AMERICANS PULLED OUT BECAUSE "I WOULD NOT SEE AMERICAN CHARGE EAGLETON, WHO HAD A MESSAGE FROM PRES. CARTER. I WOULD NOT HAVE SEEN HIM EVEN IF HE WERE AN AMBASSADOR." QADHAFI INDICATED TO IBRAHIM THAT THERE WAS NO NEED FOR HIM TO DEAL WITH U.S. CHARGE WHEN LIBYAN "PEOPLE'S AMBASSADOR HOUDEIRI" IN WASHINGTON WAS DEALING DIRECTLY WITH THE WHITE HOUSE. ACCORDING TO IBRAHIM, QADHAFI CONSIDERED THIS HIGH-LEVEL EXCHANGE A VINDICATION OF THE LIBYAN EXPERIMENT IN POPULAR DIPLOMACY. HE IS AWARE, HOWEVER, THAT THIS PHASE OF LIBYAN-U.S. BILATERAL RELATIONS HAS ENDED. QADHAFI INSISTED THAT HE MAINTAINED CONFIDENCE IN HOUDEIRI'S ABILITY TO MANAGE THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP THROUGH THE PEOPLE'S BUREAU. QADHAFI CONCLUDED IT WAS "SILLY" OF THE AMERICANS TO HAVE WITHDRAWN THEIR DIPLOMATS FROM TRIPOLI.

6. OIL SANCTIONS. IBRAHIM COMMENTED THAT HE FOUND ONE NEW ELEMENT IN QADHAFI'S REITERATED THREAT TO USE OIL AS A POLITICAL WEAPON TO COAX WASHINGTON TOWARD PRO-PALESTINIAN POLICIES. IN THIS CONTEXT, THE COLONEL SPECIFIED THAT LIBYA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE OIL COMPANIES WOULD NOT REMAIN UNAFFECTED IF HE OPTED FOR ECONOMIC EXDTS SANCTIONS AGAINST THE U.S. QADHAFI WAS CAREFUL, HOWEVER, TO AVOID PAINTING HIMSELF INTO A CORNER BY IMPOSING A PRECISE DEADLINE ON THE U.S. (CHANGES IN U.S. POLICY MUST OCCUR "NEXT YEAR").

7. C-130'S. IBRAHIM WAS UNAWARE THAT THE COLONEL'S STATEMENT OF DISINTEREST IN RECEIVING THE C-130'S SIGNIFIED ANY MODIFICATION OF POLICY, SO HE DID NOT FOLLOW UP ON QADHAFI'S EXPRESSION OF WILLINGNESS TO OBTAIN LIBYA'S MONEY BACK FOR THE AIRCRAFT.

8. U.S. POLITICS. IBRAHIM DESCRIBED QADHAFI AS "BADLY MISINFORMED" ABOUT DOMESTIC U.S. POLITICS. AFTER THE INTERVIEW, THE COLONEL ASKED WHETHER THE REPUBLICAN PARTY "WILL BE A DISASTER FOR THE ARABS." IBRAHIM SAID HE

CONFIDENTIAL

66

CONFIDENTIAL

STATE

80 4923556

PAGE 004
TOR: 272138Z AUG 80

NC 4923556

TRIED TO OUTLINE OBJECTIVELY PAST DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES IN REPUBLICAN AND DEMOCRATIC PARTY APPROACHES TO MIDDLE EAST POLICY. IF QADHAFI'S IGNORANCE ABOUT U.S. POLITICS REFLECTS THE REPORTS -- OR LACK OF REPORTING -- FROM HOUDEIRI, SAID IBRAHIM, THE PEOPLE'S BUREAU IN WASHINGTON WAS NOT PERFORMING THIS ASPECT OF ITS MISSION EFFECTIVELY.

9. SEPTEMBER 1 CELEBRATIONS. ACCORDING TO IBRAHIM, HE WAS UNABLE TO PICK UP ANY RUMORS OF DRAMATIC GESTURES WHICH QADHAFI MIGHT ANNOUNCE AT THE SEPTEMBER 1 FESTIVITIES MARKING REGIME'S ELEVENTH ANNIVERSARY. OIL COMPANY SOURCES HE MET WITH IN TRIPOLI WERE NOT PARTICULARLY DISTURBED THAT NEW PETROLEUM INITIATIVES WERE ON THE COLONEL'S AGENDA. CONSENSUS APPEARS TO BE THAT QADHAFI WILL UNDERLINE HIS DEMAND THAT EUROPEANS PAY REPARATIONS FOR WORLD WAR TWO DAMAGES TO LIBYA.

10. DOMESTIC SITUATION. IBRAHIM SAID THAT PRESUMABLY WELL-INFORMED OIL COMPANY SOURCES TOLD HIM THAT TOBRUK HAD BEEN THE SCENE OF CIVIL DISTURBANCES THAT HAD BEEN CONTAINED BY THE REGIME. THESE SOURCES NOTED, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT THE ROAD TO TOBRUK HAD REMAINED OPEN THROUGHOUT THE PERIOD OF THE ALLEGED MUTINY. A LIBYAN OFFICIAL WHO ESCORTED IBRAHIM FROM THE TRIPOLI AIRPORT TO HIS HOTEL, HOWEVER, TOLD THE JOURNALIST TO IGNORE REPORTS OF THE "COUP ATTEMPT IN TOBRUK", BUT REFUSED TO DISCUSS THE SUBJECT FURTHER WHEN IBRAHIM SAID THIS WAS THE FIRST HE HAD HEARD OF ANY PROBLEMS IN CYRENAICA (IBRAHIM TOLD US HE ARRIVED IN TRIPOLI UNAWARE OF TOBRUK INCIDENT). ON BALANCE, IBRAHIM BELIEVES QADHAFI IS NOT IN ANY IMMEDIATE DANGER OF BEING TOPPLED BY PLOTTERS. CITING TALKS WITH A WELL-PLACED EGYPTIAN SOURCE IN LIBYA, IBRAHIM CLAIMED THE COLONEL HAD ORDERED RELEASE OF MOST OF THOSE PREVIOUSLY DETAINED ON ANTI-CORRUPTION CHARGES. REPORTS OF TORTURE APPLIED ON A WIDE-SCALE AGAINST THESE PRISONERS ARE, HE FEELS, EXAGGERATED.

11. AMERICAN COMMUNITY. IBRAHIM DETECTED A "HEIGHTENED DEGREE OF ALARM" WITHIN THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY. AN AMERICAN PASTOR TOLD HIM THAT DETENTION WITHOUT CHARGE

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

STATE

80 4923556

PAGE 005

NC 4923556

TOR: 272138Z AUG 80

OF AMERICANS FOR 24-48 HOURS WAS OCCURRING. AND MANY WERE CONCERNED THAT THE PRACTICE COULD BE EXPANDED ABRUPTLY ON QADHAFI'S ORDERS. NEIGHBORHOOD POPULAR COMMITTEES HAVE ASKED TO USE THE AMERICAN SCHOOL GROUNDS FOR A FEW DAYS TO CELEBRATE SEPT. 1. AND SCHOOL PRINCIPAL MUNSON FEARS THAT ADDITIONAL ENCROACHMENTS ARE INEVITABLE. A NUMBER OF NEW TEACHERS WHO HAD SIGNED CONTRACTS WITH THE SCHOOL HAVE APPARENTLY BACKED OUT AT THE LAST MINUTE.

12. FLO. ^(Ahmad) IBRAHIM SAID HE HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY REALIZED "HOW STUPID SHAHATI IS." HE HAD A LONG SESSION WITH THE FLO DIRECTOR. DURING WHICH FORMER LONDON PEOPLE'S BUREAU OFFICIALS (MUSA KUSA) AND (AZZABI) WERE ALWAYS PRESENT. IBRAHIM DESCRIBED KUSA AS "VERY ANTI-BRITISH". AND SAID HE COULD UNDERSTAND WHY THE UK CONTINUED TO HAVE PROBLEMS WITH LIBYA IN VIEW OF KUSA'S APPARENT POLICY-MAKING ROLE. AZZABI. HE REMARKED. WAS "AN EXTREMIST -- REALLY AN EXTREMIST. ONE OF THE WORST I HAVE EVER MET." AZZABI CAPPED HIS PERFORMANCE BY TELLING IBRAHIM JUST PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE FROM TRIPOLI THAT THE AUTHORITIES WERE WATCHING THE ENEMIES OF LIBYA. AND THAT IBRAHIM'S REPORTS IN THE NYT WOULD BE MONITORED. IBRAHIM DESCRIBED THIS AS A WARNING WHICH HE TOOK AS A PERSONAL THREAT. AND INDICATED IT HAD HELPED TO PERSUADE HIM THAT IT WOULD BE UNWISE TO RETURN TO LIBYA FOR FUTURE STORIES.

— B F
— — S

14. FRENCH. IBRAHIM SAID HE WAS TOLD THAT THE FRENCH HAVE RECEIVED REPARATIONS FROM THE LIBYANS FOR DAMAGE TO THE FRENCH EMBASSY.

15. LIBYAN EXILES. QADHAFI TOLD IBRAHIM OFF-THE-RECORD EXDTS ^(Abd al Munin) THAT FORMER RCC MEMBER AL-HUNI HAS BEEN IN CONTACT WITH THE COLONEL ABOUT RETURNING TO LIBYA. BUT ARRANGEMENTS HAD NOT BEEN COMPLETED BECAUSE HUNI WAS STILL ANXIOUS ABOUT HIS PERSONAL SAFETY.

— B F

16. QADHAFI'S SISTER. IBRAHIM SAID THE COLONEL'S SISTER HAD DIED LAST MONTH.

17. DETENTION OF FSN BASHIP DULTZ. ASKED IF ANY OF HIS

CONFIDENTIAL

(2)

CONFIDENTIAL

STATE

80 4923556

PAGE 006
TOR: 272138Z AUG 80

NC 4923556

LIBYAN CONTACTS HAD MADE REFERENCE TO DULTZ. IBRAHIM SAID NO ONE HAD MENTIONED THE CASE TO HIM WHILE HE WAS IN LIBYA.

18. SOURCES. APART FROM LIBYANS, IBRAHIM SAID HE HAD LONG INTERVIEWS WITH OIL COMPANY EXECUTIVES AND ALMOST EVERY WEST EUROPEAN EMBASSY IN TRIPOLI.

19. COMMENT. WE WILL INFORM FCO OF THE PERTINENT ASPECTS OF OUR CONVERSATIONS WITH IBRAHIM. RE QADHAFI'S INADEQUATE UNDERSTANDING OF U.S. DOMESTIC POLITICS. IT IS HARDLY LIKELY THAT HOUDEIRI HAD MUCH SPARE TIME IN RECENT MONTHS TO DEVOTE TO THIS TOPIC. IN VIEW OF QADHAFI'S STATED INTENTIONS, HOWEVER, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE COLONEL WOULD UTILIZE A MORE SOPHISTICATED GRASP OF THE U.S. POLITICAL SYSTEM ONLY TO REFINE HIS AGENDA OF ANTI-U.S. MEASURES. STREATOR

END OF MESSAGE

CONFIDENTIAL

627